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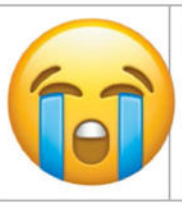
THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

AMAZING
World's top emoji revealed
p3



READING
New book from Jerry Spinelli
p22

POLL
Vote in our breakfast debate!
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August 28, 2026 • Vol. 7, Issue 332 • $7.99

Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

MONARCHS

Find out about these colorful butterflies as they prepare to embark on their extraordinary annual journey p12

DID YOU KNOW?
The USS Abraham Lincoln can travel at over 35 miles per hour, making it one of the world's fastest ships of its size.

The USS Abraham Lincoln at sea

Naming Navy ships

According to US Navy guidelines, aircraft carriers are usually named after US Presidents. The tradition began in 1945, when President Harry Truman approved changing the name of the USS Coral Sea to the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt. Eight of 11 aircraft carriers are named for Presidents.

Concerns about Navy ship conditions

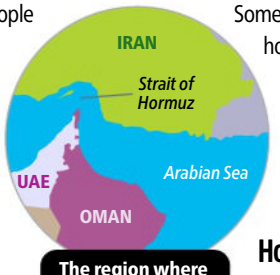
Major concerns have been raised regarding conditions aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, a US Navy warship deployed in the Middle East. The ship has been at sea for more than 260 days with about 5,000 crew members on board.

What is the USS Abraham Lincoln?

The USS Abraham Lincoln is an aircraft carrier that spans 1,092 feet, the length of more than three football fields, and is powered by nuclear energy, which enables it to travel unlimited distances without needing to refuel. The Lincoln carries about 90 military aircraft and works as a floating base and command center. It is capable of launching combat missions and carrying out humanitarian operations to help people around the world. During this deployment, the Lincoln's crew has launched more than 10,000 aircraft missions as part of the US's ongoing war with Iran.

What happened?

The Lincoln left its home port in California in November 2025. It was sent to the Middle East in January and spent 208 consecutive days at sea before a brief port visit in July. Typically, the Navy calls for a longer stop every 30 to 45 days so the ship can restock supplies and sailors can go ashore, but safety concerns related to the war have prevented the Lincoln from docking. It was originally set to return to the US in May, but the Navy has extended that time indefinitely. Concerns about conditions were first reported by military publications including *Navy Times* and *Stars and Stripes*.



The region where the ship is deployed

What have the reports said?

Families of crew members aboard the ship said sailors have reported moldy showers, clogged plumbing, contaminated drinking water, safety concerns, long-term food shortages that force troops to ration meals, and interruptions in mail service that caused letters and care packages to be delayed or lost for months. Basic hygiene supplies such as soap and toothpaste have run low. Some sailors are working shifts up to 16 hours long with few breaks. Morale on the ship is low, according to reports, and some sailors have told family members that spending uninterrupted months at sea is harming their mental health.

How did people react?

In early August, more than 200 family members attended meetings with Navy officials and expressed their concerns for their loved ones. Officials acknowledged that there had been some problems aboard the ship, like broken plumbing and low supplies, but said many of them had been resolved and others were being addressed. "We hear you loud and clear," Navy Vice Admiral Joseph Cahill said. In response to concerns about sailors' mental health during the long deployment, officials said there were mental health professionals on the ship, as well as medical experts and religious leaders. A CNN reporter who spent three days on the ship in July confirmed that she saw counselors, chaplains, and a therapy dog on the ship. However, other top military leaders and President Donald Trump denied claims of serious mental health problems among the ship's crew, saying reports had been exaggerated. Several Democratic members of the Senate (one half of Congress) demanded a formal investigation. Ruben Gallego, a senator from Arizona and a Marine veteran, requested access to the Lincoln so he could assess the conditions. Meanwhile, military leaders praised the Lincoln's crew. Admiral Brad Cooper, the senior US officer leading the war in Iran, said he had visited the ship and seen the crew's "camaraderie, teamwork, and resilience."

What will happen next?

On August 14, Hung Cao, acting secretary of the Navy, said that an aircraft carrier called the USS George Washington was heading to the Middle East to relieve the Lincoln. Cao did not give an exact date for the changeover but said it would happen "soon." Once it does, the Lincoln will head home, a journey that typically takes several weeks.

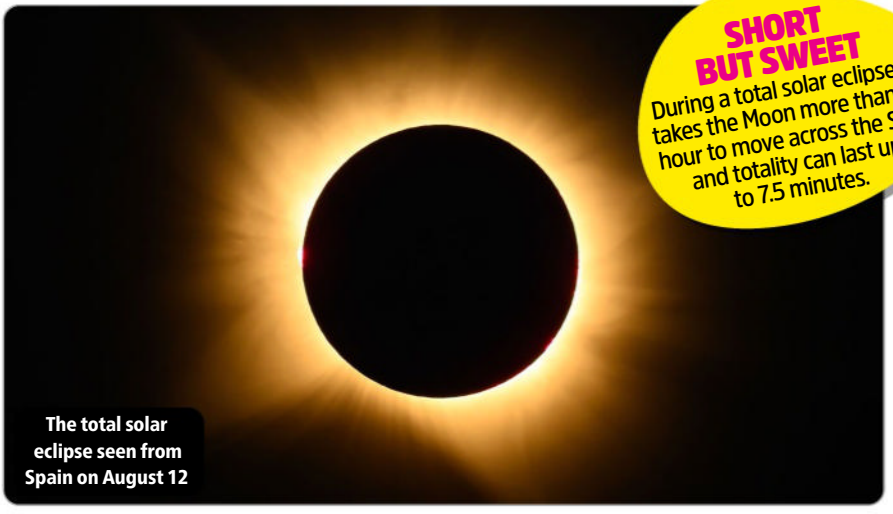
Report on Afghan girls' education

A report released on August 11 stated that about 2.4 million girls in Afghanistan are being denied an education by the Taliban (a political and military group with extreme views). The report was issued by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). Afghanistan is the only country in the world to formally ban education for girls older than age 11.

Before the Taliban came to power in the country in 2021, nearly 1 million girls were enrolled in secondary education. Since then, the Taliban has closed schools for girls and banned women from higher education and jobs. There is now a teacher shortage, and UNESCO said more than 90% of 10-year-olds in the country can't read basic text.

The Taliban has rejected calls from world leaders to restore freedoms for girls and women. UNESCO, which oversees learning and literacy programs in the country, demanded the "immediate and unconditional restoration" of education for all. "It's a basic human right and... there is no substitute," said a UNESCO official.

Girls in Afghanistan



The total solar eclipse seen from Spain on August 12

SHORT BUT SWEET
During a total solar eclipse, it takes the Moon more than an hour to move across the Sun, and totality can last up to 7.5 minutes.

Total solar eclipse in Europe

On August 12, millions of people paused to witness a solar eclipse. In parts of Europe, including Greenland, Iceland, Spain, and Portugal, onlookers experienced a total eclipse. In different areas of Europe and parts of Africa, Canada, and the northern US, people viewed a partial eclipse.

A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon lines up between Earth and the Sun. The sky grows dark as the Moon moves across the Sun and becomes bright again as the Moon continues along its path. During a total solar eclipse, people in what is called the "path of totality" can see the Moon completely block the Sun's light, except for a bright ring from the Sun's atmosphere. People who are not in the path of totality can see a partial eclipse, when the Sun is not completely covered and looks like a crescent in the sky.

About 450,000 people traveled from all over the world to witness the event in Spain, where the European Space Agency hosted a live broadcast and viewing party. Elsewhere in Europe, crowds gathered to view the partial eclipse in cities such as Edinburgh, Scotland; London, England; and Munich, Germany.

"I cannot believe what I just witnessed," said Space.com editor Daisy Dobrijevic, who saw the total eclipse from Greenland. "Nothing compares to that feeling you get when you watch the Sun transform before your very eyes."

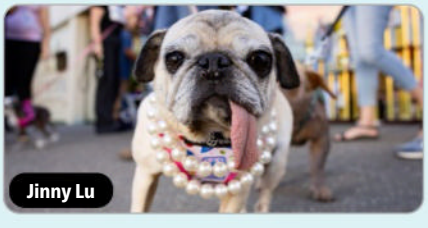
This was the first total eclipse visible in Europe since 1999. A total solar eclipse in August 2027 will be visible in Spain and parts of Africa. The next total solar eclipse visible from North America will take place in 2033.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A FABULOUS FIND

A beach day in New Jersey took an exciting turn for Mike Bowers and his son Bo, age 11, when they found a megalodon tooth. The giant prehistoric shark went extinct 4 million years ago. It was "really hard to believe," Bo said.

The tooth



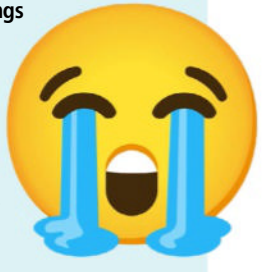
Jinny Lu

AN UNFORGETTABLE FACE

Jinny Lu, a pug with an extra-long tongue and a fondness for sunbathing, won the World's Ugliest Dog contest in California. The event, now in its 50th year, celebrates pet adoption and the idea that "true beauty comes in all shapes, sizes, and smiles," organizers said.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

The world's most popular emoji in 2025 was "loudly crying face" (shown below), which people use to express intense emotions like embarrassment, sadness, or laughing so hard they're crying. The rankings were based on a Google analysis of 665 million emojis. Second place went to 🤣, while 😂 came in third, and 🥀 had the greatest increase in usage. Language experts said emojis rise and fall in the rankings depending on whether they're popular—or not—with young people.



ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (2); KETCHUP ENTERTAINMENT; EMOJIPEDIA; COURTESY THE PUBLISHER; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); MIKE BOWERS; EMOJIPEDIA; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; US NAVY (2)

BACK TO CLASS
About 70% of US colleges and universities begin their fall terms between August 18 and September 1.

The Dartmouth College campus in New Hampshire

The 26th Amendment

The 26th Amendment to the US Constitution, signed by President Richard Nixon (above) in 1971, lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. The amendment was put forth during the Vietnam War (1965–1973), when 18-year-olds could be drafted into the military but could not vote, which sparked protests.

Confusion over voter IDs at colleges

With college students heading to campuses, legal questions are being raised about their ability to use their college IDs to vote in the midterm election on November 3.

How do college students vote?

Students can register to vote based on their home address and vote by absentee ballot or at their home polling place. Or they can register to vote in the state where they attend college since they reside there for most of the year. For many students who vote in their college's state, a college ID can often function as their proof of residency.

What is happening?

Some states ask to see IDs at the polls, and others do not. Among states that do, some are no longer accepting a college ID as a valid form of identification. Instead, they are requiring students to show a government-issued ID, like a passport or a state-issued driver's license. In April, Indiana enacted a law banning students from using college IDs to vote. In June, a similar law took effect in New Hampshire. Earlier this month, the voter advocacy group Open Democracy filed a lawsuit against New Hampshire, arguing that the law unfairly targets young voters who are less likely to have other forms of identification. Florida also passed a similar law this year, but it doesn't go into effect until 2027.

How did people react?

Opponents of these laws said the changes are part of a larger trend to make it harder for some people to vote. Courtney Hostetler, legal director of Free Speech for People, is concerned that thousands of young voters may be turned away from the polls this fall. "Student IDs are an accessible, reliable way for young voters to prove their identity when registering and voting," she said. Those in favor of the new laws said they want to hold all voters to the same standard. "College students are not a special class of voters," said New Hampshire state lawmaker Ross Berry.

What will happen next?

Open Democracy's lawsuit will move forward in the courts. Meanwhile, students who want to vote in their college's state will need to find out which documents are accepted at their polling place and be sure to arrive with everything that's needed.

WORD OF THE WEEK

PANGOLIN

The pangolin takes its name from Malay, a language spoken in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. The Malay word *peng-guling* means "roller" and refers to the pangolin's habit of rolling into a ball when it's in danger, exposing only its scales, which act like armor for protection.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

August 28, 2008

Historic Presidential nominee selected

On August 28, 2008, Barack Obama became the first Black American to win a major party's nomination for president. The Democratic party formally nominated Obama, who was then a US senator from Illinois, at its national convention in Denver, Colorado. Obama went on to defeat the Republican nominee, Senator John McCain of Arizona, to become the 44th US President and serve two terms in office.

Barack Obama at the convention

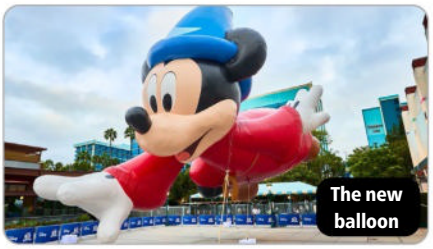
Press secretary will step down

Karoline Leavitt announced that she will leave her position as White House press secretary at the end of August. When she began the job in January 2025 at the age of 27, she was the youngest White House press secretary in history. Leavitt, appointed by President Donald Trump, communicated the policies and actions of his administration to the media. Previously, she was the national press secretary for Trump's 2024 Presidential campaign.

Stamp to honor Coast Guard

The US Postal Service will offer a new Forever stamp to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the US Coast Guard Academy, the military college that trains students to protect the nation's waters. The stamp, to be released on September 12, features photographs of the USCGC Eagle, the academy's primary training vessel since 1946, as well as the USCGC Bertholf, a modern patrol ship.

The stamp


The new balloon

New balloon for Macy's parade

Disney has unveiled a new Mickey Mouse balloon to celebrate the 100th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The Sorcerer's Apprentice Mickey, inspired by Disney's 1940 animated film *Fantasia*, will make its debut on November 26. Mickey, in his red robe and blue sorcerer's hat, will bring "optimism, imagination, and wonder" to the milestone event, Disney officials said.

Jackie the bald eagle is remembered

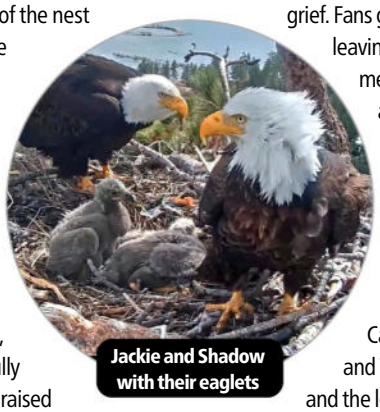
Wildlife officials announced that Jackie, a bald eagle who became famous through a live stream of her nest, died on August 10 at age 14.

Born in California's Big Bear Valley in 2012, Jackie was the first documented bald eagle chick to hatch in the area. In 2015, Friends of Big Bear Valley (FOBBV), a conservation group, installed wildlife cameras outside her nest. The cameras played live footage of the nest online, and millions of people started watching Jackie go about her daily life.

In 2018, Jackie began nesting with another bald eagle named Shadow. Over the following years, the pair raised seven eaglets together. Their most recent chicks, Sandy and Luna, hatched in April and successfully took flight in June. Jackie also raised two chicks with a previous mate.

In mid-July, wildlife officials found Jackie sick and unable to fly. She was taken to the Ojai Raptor Center, where she underwent tests and treatments. Despite the care, her condition worsened and doctors were unable to save her. By law, the National Eagle Repository will distribute Jackie's remains to Native American tribes that will use them for religious and ceremonial purposes.

After news of Jackie's death was announced, condolences poured in across social media as people from around the world expressed their grief. Fans gathered in Big Bear Valley, leaving flowers and cards at a memorial, and many people also made donations to FOBBV in Jackie's honor.

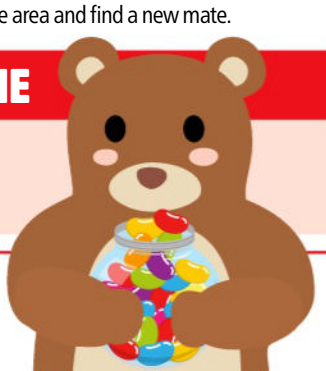

Jackie and Shadow with their eaglets

"She was fierce, she was gentle," said Jenny Voisard of FOBBV. "Watching her gave people a connection to nature." Meghan Hertel of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said, "The inspiration and the lessons she gave so many people won't be forgotten."

Shadow has recently been seen on FOBBV's cameras, and experts said it's likely that he will stay in the area and find a new mate.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Hungry bear breaks into jelly bean machine" ***ABC News***



FRIENDS OF BIG BEAR VALLEY (2); GETTY IMAGES (2); USPS; DISNEY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Around the world

Lake Maggiore

Switzerland
Providing help for Italy's water shortage

After weeks of scorching heat and low rainfall caused a drought in Italy, Switzerland is sending extra water to help its neighbor. The Swiss government said it will increase the amount of water it releases from Lake Lugano from 47,551 to 126,803 gallons per minute. This water flows down a river into Lake Maggiore, on the Swiss-Italian border, where water levels have fallen in recent weeks.

Burgas

Burgas, Bulgaria
Host city for music contest announced

Burgas, the fourth-largest city in Bulgaria, has been selected to host the 2027 Eurovision Song Contest. It will be the first time Bulgaria has hosted the annual international event, which is held in the country that won the competition the previous year. Bulgarian artist Dara was the winner in 2026. Judges said Burgas, a coastal city on the Black Sea with a history of hosting music events, offered "a very unique setting" for the contest.

Earthquake damage

Colombia
Remembering earthquake victims

The Colombian government announced a three-day mourning period to remember more than 200 people who were killed by the strongest earthquake to hit the country in 100 years. The 7.4 magnitude quake hit western Colombia on August 10, causing many buildings to collapse. Rescue teams have been working to provide housing and supplies to the survivors.

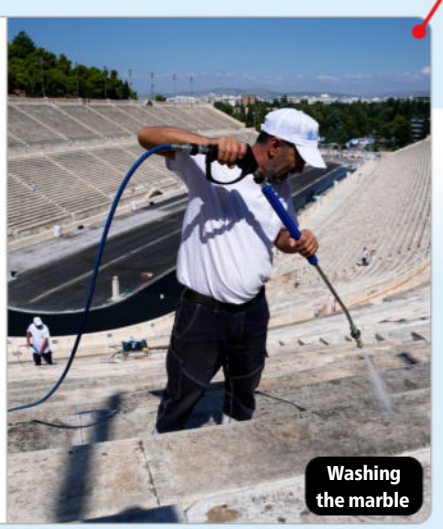
Oulu, Finland
Train service begins again

A train is connecting Finland and Sweden for the first time in nearly 40 years. The railway runs from the Finnish city of Oulu to the Swedish town of Haparanda. Service was halted in the 1980s due to low passenger numbers and differences between Finnish and Swedish train tracks. On August 10, the route reopened. Trains will operate twice a day.

A Finnish train

Athens, Greece
Monument cleaned

Workers are thoroughly cleaning the Panathenaic Stadium for the first time in more than 100 years. The structure was built for the first modern Olympics in 1896, on a site that previously hosted athletic competitions in ancient Greece. Now a popular tourist attraction, the historic venue is also used for a handoff of the Olympic flame before the Games. The cleaning crew works carefully because the stadium is made entirely of white marble.


Washing the marble

AP (2); GETTY IMAGES (6); PR; SHUTTERSTOCK

Around the world

Some of the racers

Vilnius, Lithuania
Corgis compete for glory

Paws flew across Vingis park in Vilnius on August 15 during the city's fifth annual Corgi Race. At the event, 150 dogs from nine countries competed in a 25-meter race, costume parade, and contests for the loudest bark and "smartest nose." GG, a corgi from the US, emerged victorious as the fastest runner on four fluffy legs.

China
"Bad" movie has surprising success

A movie described as "so bad it's good" became an unexpected hit in China. The low-budget animated film *Niu Lai* ("The Cow Is Coming") was reportedly created by a mother and son. It features a newborn calf who learns life lessons in a dream. After clips of its "glitchy" scenes went viral online, people flocked to see it. Now *Niu Lai* has brought in more than $2.5 million at the box office, making it one of the year's highest-grossing films.

The airport

Incheon, South Korea
World's busiest airport named

According to a new report, Incheon International Airport has become the busiest airport for travel across global borders. In the first six months of 2026, it served 38.4 million international passengers. Heathrow Airport in the UK ranked second with 37.8 million passengers, and Singapore's Changi Airport came in third with 34.5 million. When domestic flights are included, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport has the most traffic overall.

India and Pakistan
Anniversary marked

Pakistan and India celebrated their independence days, marking the 80th year since they gained freedom from British rule and became separate nations. On August 14, flag-raising ceremonies were held across Pakistan, and president Asif Ali Zardari shared a message to the nation. On August 15, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi gave an address from the historic Red Fort in Delhi as celebrations took place throughout the country.

A celebration in India

A worker

Australia
Delivery workers receive pay boost

Australian food delivery drivers will now be paid a minimum rate and insured for work-related injuries. Previously, being paid per delivery could leave workers with rates below the national minimum wage of $18.83 per hour. On August 11, Australia's Fair Work Commission ruled that food delivery companies must pay their workers at least $22.05 an hour.

Is breakfast the most important meal?

Some people say the old advice doesn't necessarily hold up anymore.

What you need to know

- **A fast is a period without food. "Breakfast" is the meal you eat to "break" your overnight "fast."**
- **Many studies have shown that eating breakfast has health benefits.**
- **In a 2020 study, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 82.4% of children and teens eat breakfast. Young kids were more likely to eat it than teens.**
- **Before the 1800s, people ate leftovers or foods like cheese, meat, or fish for breakfast.**

GOOD START
In Japan, many people eat a dish of fermented soybeans, called natto, for breakfast, and in Egypt, stewed fava beans are popular.

We've all heard the saying: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Over the years, many studies have backed this up. They have shown that eating first thing in the morning has multiple benefits, from helping kids pay attention in school to preventing heart disease and diabetes later in life. Other studies, however, have found that this doesn't hold true for everyone. Some health experts argue that the value of breakfast depends entirely on what people eat and that a bowl of sugary cereal isn't necessarily better than skipping the meal entirely. What do you think? Is breakfast the most important meal?

Yes—it's a great beginning

After a good night's sleep, your body is rested and restored—and in need of nutrition. A healthy breakfast gives you the calories you need to get going, concentrate in class, and run around at recess. It also tides you over until lunch. If you don't have breakfast and let yourself get too hungry, you might reach for a quick fix, like sugar or an overly processed snack instead of something healthy. Studies have shown that people who eat breakfast tend to eat healthier foods throughout the day. Breakfast is also a nice ritual, and it doesn't have to be a big deal. You can grab something simple, healthy, and not too sweet, like fruit or toast.

No—not everyone needs it

Breakfast is great for many people but not everyone. We're all different, and some people simply aren't hungry or ready to eat first thing in the morning. They're better off eating when they're naturally hungry later in the day. Plus studies have shown that breakfast doesn't always have the health benefits people say it does. That's especially true if people eat things that aren't healthy just because they feel like they "should" be eating something. Are the nutritional downsides of a bowl of sugary cereal really worth it? It's more important to focus on the quality of what we eat throughout the day, not just at one meal.

YES Three reasons breakfast is the most important meal

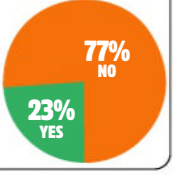
1. **Our bodies need nutrition to power us through the day and help us concentrate, learn, and exercise.**
2. **People who eat breakfast tend to eat better throughout the day, instead of reaching for an unhealthy snack.**
3. **It doesn't have to be a big deal—it can be quick, simple, and healthy.**

NO Three reasons breakfast is not the most important meal

1. **Not everyone needs to eat first thing in the morning, and some people are better off eating when they're actually hungry.**
2. **Some studies have found that breakfast doesn't have all the positive effects on our health that people say it does.**
3. **It's better to focus on eating well all day than to put so much pressure on one meal.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if kids should attend school year-round.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think breakfast is the most important meal or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

A storm-tracking legend

Jim Cantore is a beloved meteorologist on the Weather Channel, known for reporting from the center of hurricanes, tornadoes, and other extreme events. He recently celebrated 40 years at the network and spoke to *The Week Junior* about his career.

When did your love of weather begin?
Since I was a child growing up in Vermont, where there were colorful autumns and big snowstorms. I always wanted to be outside when it was pouring rain or when the sky turned dark in the middle of the day. My dad noticed and suggested that I study the weather. That changed my life—I didn't even know meteorologist was a job.

Giving a live forecast in 2017

How did you end up on the Weather Channel?
I studied meteorology at Lyndon State College (now Northern Vermont University), which had a TV station. I was terrible on camera at first, but then I realized I just needed to explain the weather as if I were talking to a friend. The Weather Channel saw a tape of my work and took a chance on me.

What is your workday like?
I wake up around 3 a.m. and check weather maps and models for the day ahead. Then I head to the studio to meet with producers, prepare the forecast, and go live to explain what's coming and how people can stay safe.

What is the hardest part?
Seeing the damage after a major storm and knowing people are hurting. People trust me with their safety, and that is a huge responsibility.

How does it feel to mark 40 years at the Weather Channel?
I'm proud of what I've done, but I want to keep challenging myself and find new ways to reach people, such as on YouTube.

Best advice for young people?
Do what you love.

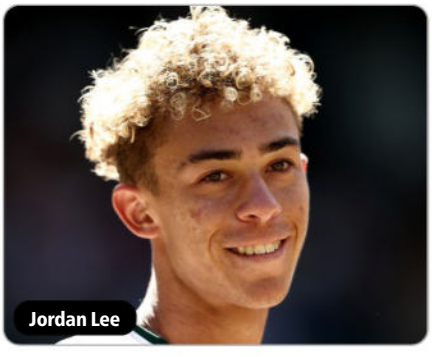
Jim Cantore

DID YOU KNOW?
Benjamin Franklin was one of America's first weather scientists, studying storms and patterns nearly 300 years ago.

Author is honored

Ann Patchett has been named the recipient of the 2026 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. It honors an American writer whose work shows "mastery of the art." Patchett is the author of 18 books, including *Bel Canto* and *The Dutch House*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She will receive the award at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, on August 22. Acting Librarian of Congress Robert R. Newlen said Patchett "thinks deeply and writes evocatively about human connection."

Ann Patchett


Jordan Lee

Leading in his sport

Jordan Lee, a 16-year-old tennis player from Florida, recently became the first American in 12 years to win the Wimbledon Boys' Singles title. After a severe wrist injury forced him off the court for months and lowered his ranking, he had to advance through the qualifying rounds. He is the second player in the tournament's 149-year history to win the championship as a qualifier. "A year ago, I was sitting on the couch at home and didn't know if I was going to play tennis again," Lee said after his win. "Standing here with this trophy means a lot."

OVERHEARD

"If we allow ourselves to only see people a certain way, then we're living a very limited life."
Octavia Spencer, the Oscar-winning actress known for films such as *The Help*, *Hidden Figures*, and *The Witches*

GETTY IMAGES (4); EMILY DORIO

SAY WHAT?
The study of sounds and signals in animal communication is called zoosemiotics.

A pair of zebra finches

Scientist translates zebra finch calls

A scientist has won a $100,000 prize for bringing humans closer to communicating with animals. Julie Elie of the University of California, Berkeley, won the 2026 Coller-Dolittle prize for translating calls made by zebra finches.

The Coller-Dolittle prize is given to scientists who work on advances in human-animal communication. Many scientists who submitted entries used artificial intelligence (AI, a computer system that learns from experience like humans do) to help them understand animal language. Some entries this year included a team that decoded the language of chimpanzees and another that showed how African striped mice used ultrasonic (very high-pitched) squeaks to identify themselves.

Julie Elie

Elie's work showed how zebra finches use sounds to tell others what they are doing. Zebra finches are common in Australia and Indonesia. Elie said she chose to study these birds because they are very "chatty," making lots of sounds that she could collect and decode. She spent more than 10 years recording the finches and classifying all the noises they made, along with the behavior that accompanied the noises. Then she used AI to analyze the sounds that made up different calls. She identified 11 types of calls that communicated key meanings, such as "I'm here" or "I'm hungry."

To test her work, Elie played recordings of many different zebra finches' calls to some finches in a lab. She gave the birds a button they could press to skip to the next call. When certain calls played, she rewarded the birds with seeds. Over time, the finches learned to choose calls that would earn them a reward and skip the others.

Sometimes the finches made mistakes, confusing two calls that sounded different but had similar meanings. For example, they might choose a "tet" call that means "Are you here? I'm here!" instead of a "pitchiou" call that announces "I'm over here!" from far away. They were more likely to confuse similar meanings than similar sounds. Elie said this showed that the birds "understand the meaning of their call types" and categorize sounds in their minds based on the message each noise communicates.

Decoding dolphin whistles

The team that won last year's Coller-Dolittle prize studied the language of bottlenose dolphins in Florida. Using suction cups, the researchers were able to place underwater microphones on the dolphins' bodies without hurting them so they could record the noises the marine mammals made.

By analyzing the recordings, the scientists found that about half of all dolphin sounds acted like words—they had specific purposes that all the dolphins understood. For example, the team discovered a whistling sound that was used to express alarm and another whistle that meant the dolphins were curious about an unusual event.

FUN FACT
Groups of bonobos are typically led by females, while groups of chimpanzees are usually led by males.

Bonobos

Touch helps apes keep the peace

Just as humans may offer each other a hug or a pat on the back, our closest living relatives, bonobos and chimpanzees, often use physical touch in social interactions. For example, chimps have been observed calming a distressed companion with pats and embraces. Now a study suggests that body contact helps apes maintain harmony in group situations that could lead to conflict.

Researchers saw touch among bonobos and chimps in sanctuaries shortly before feeding time, when the apes had to share or compete for a limited supply of peanuts. "Before stressful events, they come together, they reassure each other," study co-author Zanna Clay explained. One group of chimps formed what the team called a "reassurance train," hugging one another from behind.

Apes that had engaged in comforting touches shared food more peacefully. "Social touch is a powerful communicative tool," said co-author Jake Booker, "and likely one of the earliest channels through which social bonds form." Scientists think this type of behavior may have originated in a common ancestor of bonobos, chimps, and humans.

Animal of the week: Himalayan pangolin

Scientists have identified a new species—the Himalayan pangolin. Experts used to think this was a subspecies of the Chinese pangolin, but a new study found that it's a different species with a bigger body, longer tail, and smaller ears.

- **LIFESPAN:** Unknown in the wild
- **HABITAT:** The southern Himalayan foothills
- **SIZE:** 37 inches long on average
- **DIET:** Mainly ants and termites
- **FUN FACT:** One individual pangolin can eat up to 70 million insects per year.

Good week / Bad week

European countries

According to the Environmental Performance Index by Yale and Columbia Universities, Europe is leading the way in caring for the environment. Estonia (pictured above) ranks first out of 177 countries, and 19 of the top 20 are in Europe. The US is 27th.

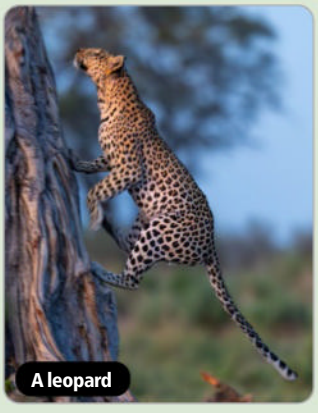
Pacific gray whales

Conservationists are asking US officials to do more to protect these whales, whose numbers have declined from 20,000 in 2019 to fewer than 13,000 today. Climate change has reduced their food supply, and they face many other threats.

Ask an expert: "Why do leopards climb trees?" Hanna, 11, Pennsylvania

Katie Kuhn
Assistant Curator of Large Mammals, Milwaukee County Zoo

Leopards climb trees for the view, for protection, or just to relax. They may climb up to see what's happening with their neighbors. They also use trees to protect their meals from other predators, and they can take it easy on a tree limb to stay out of the hot Sun.


A leopard

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Milwaukee County Zoo at milwaukeezoo.org.

GETTY IMAGES (3); TULSHI LAXMI SUWAL; ADOBE STOCK; ON LEFT PAGE: ALAMY; BERKELEY; GETTY IMAGES

Winged wonders fly on

Monarch butterflies migrate thousands of miles to survive.

Millions of these colorful visitors to backyards and gardens across the US are about to embark on an extraordinary annual trip.

A monarch butterfly and a caterpillar

What are monarchs?

Monarch butterflies are originally native to North America, but they are now found throughout the Americas and parts of Europe and Asia. They are known for their striking black and orange colors, which serve to warn predators that the butterflies are toxic and can make them sick. The wingspan of a monarch butterfly is three to four inches, and it weighs less than a paper clip. Monarchs rely heavily on milkweed plants to survive and reproduce, as these plants are the caterpillars' sole source of food and the only plants adult butterflies lay eggs on. Milkweed plants are also the source of the butterflies' toxins.

Emerging from a chrysalis

A fascinating life cycle

Female monarch butterflies lay hundreds of eggs on milkweed plants, and these eggs quickly hatch into small caterpillars. Monarch caterpillars have yellow, black, and cream-colored bands. Over a couple of weeks, the caterpillars repeatedly shed their skin and become voracious milkweed eaters as they grow drastically in size. They eventually attach to a leaf or branch and form a pupa, also known as a chrysalis, which is initially green with gold dots and eventually becomes clear. After one to two weeks in the pupa stage, adult butterflies emerge. Most monarch butterflies will live only weeks, during which time they mate and lay eggs. Others will not breed, instead saving energy for their months-long migrations.

CREDIT

More migrating butterflies

Painted lady

The world's most widespread butterfly, the painted lady (right) prefers open areas, such as prairies, fields, and gardens.

Common buckeye

Found across the US, the common buckeye (right) gets its name from spots on its wings that look like eyes. It belongs to a group called brush-footed butterflies, which have brush-like features on their front legs.

an epic journey

MANY NAMES
A large group of butterflies may be called a flutter, swarm, rabble, or kaleidoscope.

WOW!
The longest known butterfly migration was made by a male monarch that traveled at least 2,880 miles.

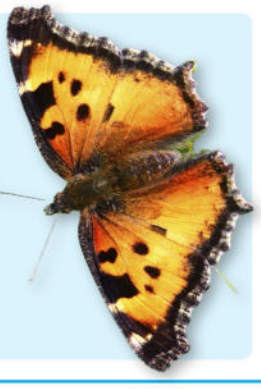
Monarch butterflies, like these in Mexico, eat nectar from flowers to power them through their long travels and sustain them through the winter.

Red admiral

A common butterfly in North America, the red admiral (right) drinks nectar from flowers but also sips from tree sap or puddles. Red admiral caterpillars build silk shelters to hide from predators.

California tortoiseshell

This orange and brown brush-footed butterfly (right) is found across western North America. The undersides of its wings are brown, acting as camouflage when it perches on a tree.



Monarchs rest on a branch.

Monarch migration

The butterflies migrate across North America every fall and spring. Mid-August marks the start of fall migration to warm destinations for the winter, with monarchs flying up to 2,000 miles south. The majority of monarchs living east of the Rocky Mountains migrate to Mexico, while those living west of the Rockies migrate mainly to California. They can fly up to 100 miles a day, riding air currents to save energy. At night, they rest in clusters on trees or shrubs to keep warm. In spring, monarchs fly north to find food and reproduce. Because they lay eggs along the way, multiple generations of butterflies make the trip. Scientists aren't sure how monarchs know to return to the same place every year.

Volunteers plant milkweed.

Conservation efforts

Monarchs are pollinators (animals that carry pollen from one plant to another), so they help plants reproduce, which benefits the environment. However, monarch populations have been declining since the 1990s. One of the biggest threats to the species is habitat loss. Another is climate change because it can upset the growth of milkweed plants and make weather events like storms or heat waves more frequent or intense, disrupting migration and exposing monarchs to harsh weather. Monarchs are also at risk from harmful chemicals called pesticides that can hurt the butterflies and milkweed plants they rely on. Conservationists say that planting milkweed and reducing the use of pesticides can help butterflies.

STAY COOL

The Large Hadron Collider's magnets are kept extremely cold—at -456.25° F—which is even colder than it is in outer space.

A section of the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest particle accelerator

Hadron collider being updated

One of the world's biggest and most powerful machines has shut down—but only so it can come back even better in 2030. The Large Hadron Collider (LHC), which helps scientists understand the secrets of the universe, has been switched off for a huge upgrade that will take several years.

The LHC is a particle accelerator, which is a machine that propels tiny bits of matter at very high speeds. It's 17 miles long, shaped in a ring, and buried more than 300 feet underground, partly in France and partly in Switzerland. The LHC uses powerful magnets to spin subatomic particles (particles that are even smaller than atoms, the building blocks of the universe) in a giant circle until they are traveling close to the speed of light.

Inside a tunnel at the LHC facility

The LHC is operated by CERN (which stands for the European Organisation for Nuclear Research in French) in Switzerland. The machine makes tiny particles crash into one another. These collisions create mini versions of what happened during the birth of the universe about 13.8 billion years ago—an event known as the big bang. By studying the results, scientists can then learn more about how the universe works.

CERN began operating the LHC in 2008. So far, its most famous discovery occurred in 2012, when a collision revealed a special particle called the Higgs boson (see box at right). This helped answer some questions about mass—such as why some objects are heavy, light, or entirely weightless.

According to CERN, the machine has entered "Long Shutdown 3" for an upgrade that will "extend this scientific adventure far into the future." Over the next few years, thousands of engineers, physicists, and technicians will replace 0.7 miles of magnets and other parts while upgrading the collider's detectors and support systems.

The improved machine, which will be called the High-Luminosity Large Hadron Collider (HiLumi LHC), is expected to reopen in 2030. It will be able to detect up to 10 times more particle collisions than the current LHC can. That higher capacity will help scientists collect even more data.

Researchers hope the upgraded collider will reveal new secrets about the Higgs boson and shed light on other ideas. These include "dark matter," an invisible substance thought to make up more than a quarter of the universe.

Particle pioneers

François Englert (left) and Peter Higgs

Long before the Higgs boson ("boson" is another word for "particle") was discovered by the Large Hadron Collider in 2012, scientists François Englert and Peter Higgs believed it existed. Working separately in the 1960s, they each developed a theory that an invisible field fills the universe, like water fills a swimming pool. Their work suggested that the way particles move through the field is what gives them their mass and that a new particle would prove it exists.

It took nearly 50 years and the LHC to find the particle, now named the Higgs boson. The discovery confirmed Higgs' and Englert's theories. In 2013, they shared the Nobel Prize in Physics for helping explain one of the universe's greatest mysteries.

New dinosaur species found in Thailand

A new species of giant dinosaur has been identified in Thailand. The plant-eating creature, Uragasaurus kalasinensis, lived about 145 million years ago. It had a long neck and may have been up to about 65 feet long—about the same as two school buses parked end to end.

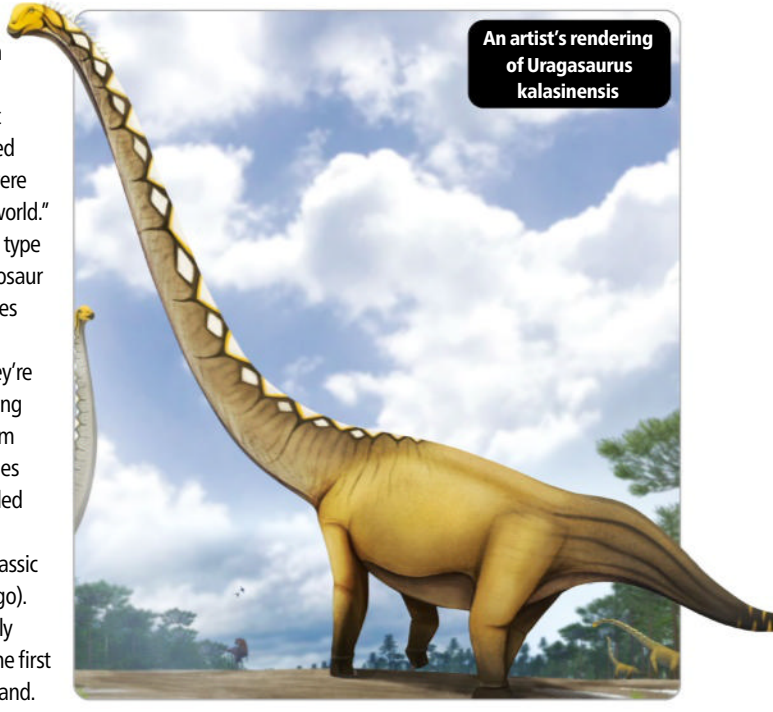
Scientists exploring an area in Kalasin Province, in northeast Thailand, found many dinosaur teeth and bones. One fossil stood out: a single, unusual dinosaur vertebra (part of a backbone).

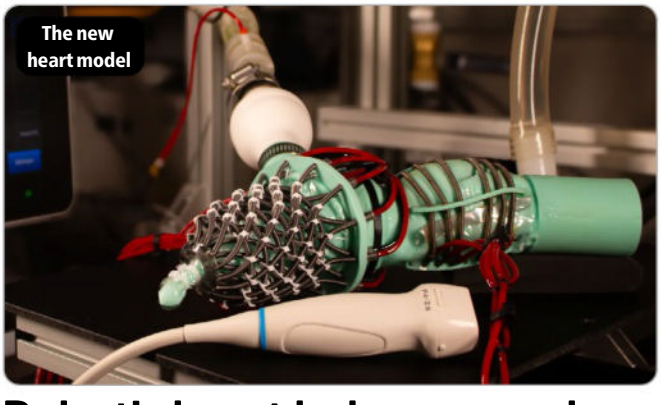
GIANT WONDERS
Sauropods were the largest of all dinosaurs and the biggest land animals that ever lived.

Typically, a new species is identified when experts find several bones or a whole skeleton. In this case, the team had one vertebra to work with. That turned out to be enough, however, because it was well-preserved and had unique features. For example, it was Y-shaped, which has not been seen in other dinosaur fossils, and had air pockets and ridges that set it apart. Apirut Nilpanapan, who led the study, said these differences were "unlike any other dinosaur in the world."

U. kalasinensis is a type of sauropod, a dinosaur group that includes Diplodocus and Brontosaurus. They're known for having long necks, which helped them reach food on trees. The new species belonged to a sauropod family called Mamenchisauridae, which lived in Southeast Asia during the Late Jurassic period (164 to 145 million years ago).

Although fossils from this family have been found in China, this is the first time they were discovered in Thailand.


An artist's rendering of Uragasaurus kalasinensis


The new heart model

Robotic heart helps researchers

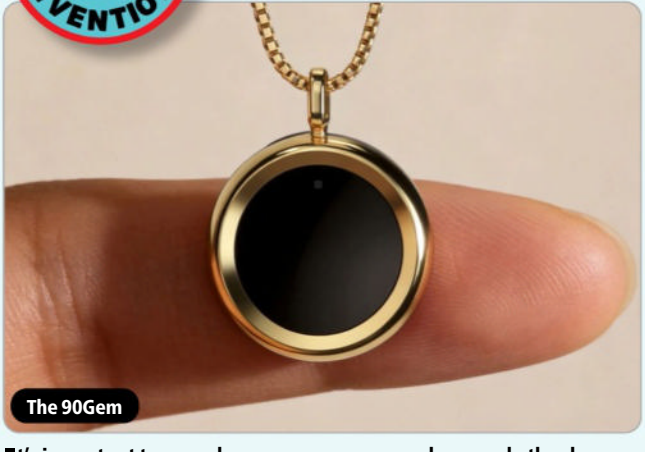
A new soft robotic heart could help scientists develop a treatment for a mysterious, complex condition called HFpEF, which affects more than 3 million Americans.

With every beat, the heart contracts when it pumps out blood and expands when it fills back up again. For people with HFpEF, the heart pumps blood out effectively but has trouble refilling because its muscle fibers are too stiff to expand. Scientists do not fully understand what causes HFpEF and haven't been able to develop a treatment for it.

Earlier versions of the robotic heart were limited because they couldn't respond to changing conditions. The new device senses when the pressure of the fluid flowing through it changes, then tightens or relaxes its artificial muscle fibers in response. This re-creates the stiffening of HFpEF more realistically, which scientists hope will help them find ways to treat the disease.

AMAZING INVENTION

Jewelry to track sun exposure


The 90Gem

It's important to reapply sunscreen on a long hike or a day at the beach, but it can be hard to remember to do it. Now a pendant can sense your personal sun exposure and nudge you when it's time.

The 90Gem detects sunlight's UVA and UVB rays, which can cause sunburn and other harm to skin, and keeps track of how much you've been exposed to throughout the day. It compares that information to your skin type. The device connects to an app and alerts you when it's time to reapply sunscreen or seek out some shade.

PAKORN CHOTCHAIYAPORN; COURTESY OF THANH NHO DO. THE 90; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; SAMUEL JOSEPH HERTZOG, CERN; MAXIMILIEN BRICE/CERN

Photos of the week

Sky high
A monument in Greece features 13-foot umbrellas that change color.

Who, me?
A barn owl was photographed at a wildlife park in France.

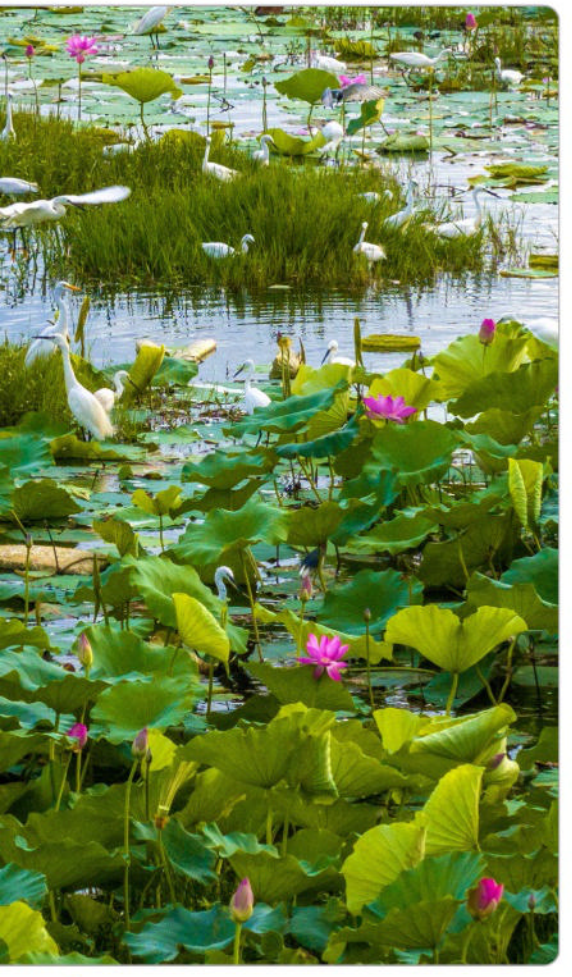
Feathered flock
This image of egrets was taken at a nature reserve in China.

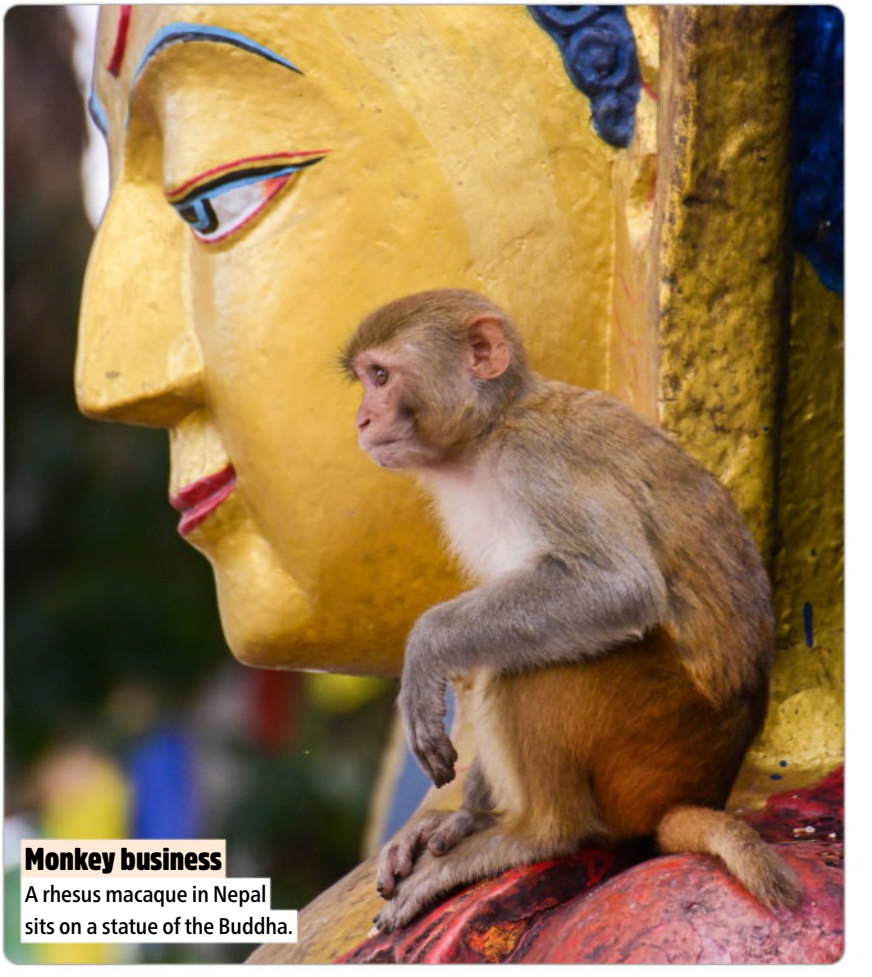
GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Wild wonder
A diver photographed a lionfish in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey.

Bright spots
Visitors walk through a colorful art installation by Yayoi Kusama in Germany.





Monkey business
A rhesus macaque in Nepal sits on a statue of the Buddha.

LOOKING AHEAD
The World Aquatics Championships will be held in Budapest, Hungary, next summer.

Gretchen Walsh (left) and Kate Douglass with their medals after the women's 50-meter freestyle

US shines in Pan Pacific swim meet

Some of the world's best swimmers gathered in Irvine, California, from August 12–15 for the 2026 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships.

The meet is one of the biggest international swimming competitions for countries outside Europe and is usually held every four years. The event hadn't taken place since 2018, though, because it was canceled in 2022 due to the pandemic. It was also the first time the event was held in the US since 2010.

The US, Australia, Canada, and Japan were the host nations, with swimmers from China, Brazil, and other countries also competing. Olympic champions Katie Ledecky, Kate Douglass, Gretchen Walsh, Torri Huske, and Bobby Finke were among the US stars.

Jack Alexy

The US finished on top of the medal standings, winning the most overall and the most golds. US swimmers earned 19 golds, 22 silvers, and nine bronzes. Australia came in second place with 35 medals, including 15 golds.

On the first day, Ledecky won the women's 1,500-meter freestyle. Her time of 15:36.09 extended her winning streak in the event, which dates back to 2010. The US team of Will Modglin, Van Mathias, Walsh, and Douglass also wowed in the mixed 4x100-meter medley relay, setting a new world record with a time of 3:36.70.

Among the highlights the next day, Katharine Berkoff won the women's 50-meter backstroke in 26.90, a US record. Summer McIntosh of Canada finished first in the women's 400-meter individual medley in 4:28.01, shattering the meet record by nearly four minutes.

The US continued to perform well on the third day. Walsh won the women's 100-meter butterfly in a championship-record 55.15, while Jack Alexy won the men's 100-meter freestyle in 47.14, also a championship record.

Douglass delivered a historic moment on the final day, breaking the world record in the women's 50-meter freestyle twice. After setting a record of 23.49 in the morning prelims, she returned that evening to win the event in 23.19. Walsh took second, .55 behind.

There was also a major upset in the women's 800-meter freestyle. Lani Pallister of Australia won in 8:06.10, beating Ledecky, who had never before lost the event at an international competition. Ledecky came in second with a time of 8:07.26.

Another major competition

Top European swimmers competed at the 38th edition of the European Aquatics Championships, held July 31–August 16 in Paris, France. Among the history-making performances, Italy's Sara Curtis (shown above) broke the world record in the women's 50-meter backstroke twice at the competition. Johannes Liebmann of Germany broke the world record in the men's 1,500-meter freestyle by nearly four seconds. Hungarian swimmers Hubert Kos and Kristof Milak set European records in the men's 200-meter backstroke and men's 100-meter butterfly. Great Britain finished the competition with the most gold medals at 14, while Italy had the most medals overall with 43.

FUN FACT
Mrs. Met, a mascot for the New York Mets, recently became the first female to be inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame.

The Twins and the Phillies walking out of the cornfield before the game

Field of Dreams game held

An event known as the Field of Dreams game was held for the third time in MLB (Major League Baseball) history. In a ballpark surrounded by cornfields in Dyersville, Iowa, the Philadelphia Phillies defeated the Minnesota Twins, 7–1.

The game was inspired by *Field of Dreams*, a 1989 movie starring Kevin Costner as an Iowa farmer. In the film, he builds a baseball field in his cornfield after a voice tells him to do so. The field attracts the ghosts of former MLB players.

The first two Field of Dreams games, in 2021 and 2022, were played in temporary stadiums that were taken down afterward. This time, the game was played in a new permanent ballpark. The field has dimensions similar to those of MLB ballparks, with one major difference: A cornfield sits just beyond the right-field wall.

Before the game on August 13 , the players walked out of the cornfield, as characters do in the film. As part of a ceremony, 26 members of the Baseball Hall of Fame also emerged from the corn.

Once the action got underway, Phillies slugger Kyle Schwarber stole the show. He homered on the third pitch he saw, giving his team an early 1–0 lead. The Phillies added a second run in the first inning, then the Twins trimmed the deficit to 2–1 with a run in the bottom of the second.

In the top of the fourth, Schwarber launched another home run, bringing in two runs to extend the Phillies' lead to 4-1. Bryce Harper drove in a fifth run later in the inning, and Brandon Marsh added a two-run homer in the seventh. Starting pitcher Aaron Nola, who completed five innings while striking out nine batters, earned the win.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Tom Haladey**

Team: **Balboa Park Snakes (softball)**

"Coach Tom is the best! He is also my dad. He teaches us cool drills and complex plays. He is so positive and doesn't make us feel bad after losing a game. He created more than half our team, searching for friends who would be interested, and he brought softball back to Balboa Park. Practices were supposed to be one hour, but almost all lasted two and a half hours because we love how he makes them fun." Amanda, 10, California

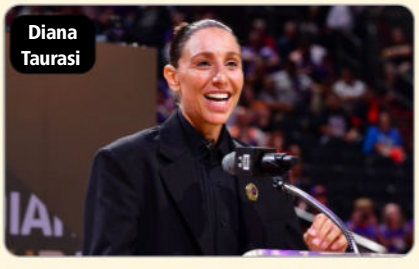
To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

MORE BIG MOMENTS

Joshua Báez

BASEBALL

In his Major League Baseball (MLB) debut against the Chicago Cubs on August 15, St. Louis Cardinals rookie Joshua Báez hit a home run in each of his first three at bats. He is the first player to ever hit three home runs in his first MLB game. In the Cardinals' 8–4 victory, Báez had five runs batted in.


Diana Taurasi

BASKETBALL

The Phoenix Mercury inducted former player Diana Taurasi into the franchise's Ring of Honor on August 16. The team also retired Taurasi's #3 jersey, meaning no other Mercury player will ever wear that number. In her 20 seasons with the team, Taurasi led the Mercury to three WNBA championships.

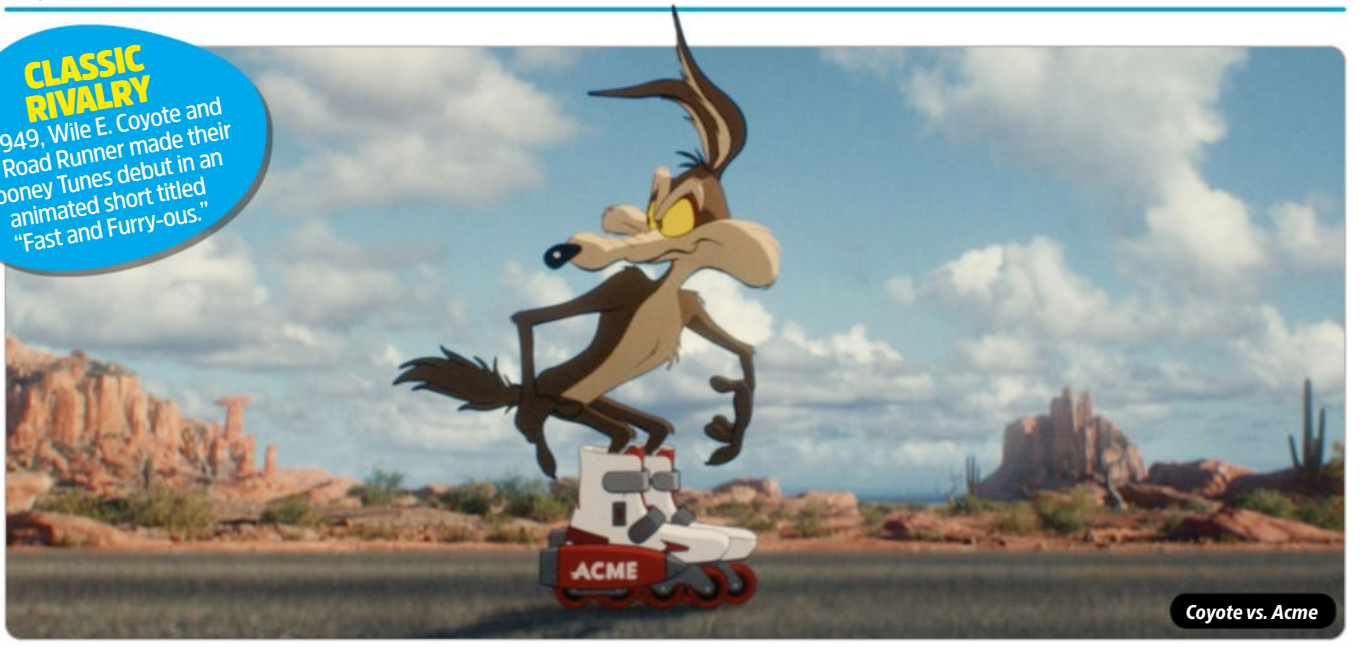
Cameroon players

SOCCER

Cameroon defeated Malawi, 3–0, in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) Final on August 16 in Rabat, Morocco. Marie Ngah Manga scored two goals for Cameroon, and Naomi Eto scored the third. This is Cameroon's first WAFCON title after finishing in second place three times before.

GETTY IMAGES (3); CAF ONLINE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

CLASSIC RIVALRY
In 1949, Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner made their Looney Tunes debut in an animated short titled "Fast and Furry-ous."



Coyote vs. Acme

Coyote vs. Acme heads to theaters

Looney Tunes characters star in a new live-action and animated comedy.

For nearly 100 years, Looney Tunes characters such as Bugs Bunny and Tweety have been starring in funny animated shorts and films. They were paired with human co-stars in the live-action/animated hybrid movies *Space Jam* (1996), *Looney Tunes Back in Action* (2003), and *Space Jam: A New Legacy* (2021). Now a new courtroom comedy, *Coyote vs. Acme*, is bringing them back to the big screen in a similar way. The film arrives in theaters on August 28.

The main Looney Tunes character in the movie is determined but unlucky Wile E. Coyote. He was originally created by animation legend Chuck Jones. Wile E. is known for his repeated failed attempts to catch the Road Runner, a speedy bird. Wile E.'s biggest problem is that he often uses gadgets and devices made by the fictional Acme Corporation, and they always malfunction, causing unintended consequences. In the film, he hires a human lawyer to sue the company.

John Cena

Actor Will Forte, a recent star of *The Breadwinner*, plays Wile E.'s lawyer. Lana Condor plays his niece and legal-assistant, and former pro wrestler John Cena plays Acme's attorney. Animated characters were added to the live-action scenes after they were shot. While filming scenes with Wile E., a puppeteer operated a life-size puppet that could make basic expressions. It helped the actors know where to look and how to react to the character.

The plot of the film was inspired by writer and Ian Frazier's humorous article of the same name, published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 1990. It imagines a lawyer for Wile E. giving a statement about the ways that Acme products had injured Wile E. on 85 occasions while he tried to catch the Road Runner. *Coyote vs. Acme* director Dave Green told *The Week Junior* that Frazier's piece "mirrored the original Looney Tunes work in the best possible way." He also said it provided a good basis for the film, which expands the idea into a larger story "about justice and fighting back." Green said it is "smart and funny" and was made for kids as well as adults who grew up loving Looney Tunes cartoons.

Green also explained that Wile E.'s never-give-up attitude is a major theme in the movie. "He falls down, dusts himself off, and gets right back up and tries again," he said. "There's a lot we can learn from a character who is that resilient, persistent, and passionate."

A history of hilarity

The first Looney Tunes cartoons were released in 1930 as a series of animated shorts for Warner Bros. Among the franchise's most famous stars are Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, Tweety, Sylvester, Porky Pig, and Daffy Duck (all above), along with Wile E. Coyote, the Road Runner, and the rooster Foghorn Leghorn.

Each has a distinctive personality, *Coyote vs. Acme* director Dave Green told *The Week Junior*. "Porky has always been the everyman, and Bugs has always been the mischief maker," he said. "Daffy is arrogant, wacky, and stubborn. Coyote is as much of a fool as he is a genius."

The Looney Tunes franchise also includes Merrie Melodies cartoons, which feature orchestral music. In 1992, the 1957 Merrie Melodies short *What's Opera, Doc?* became the first animated short film to be inducted into the Library of Congress's National Film Registry.

WOW! In 2022, Vincent van Gogh's painting *Orchard with Cypresses* sold at auction for about $117 million, a record price for a piece of his art.

Dear Van Gogh

Game features van Gogh's art

The video game Sky: Children of the Light is an adventure that allows players to explore beautiful landscapes and solve puzzles. Thanks to a recent update, Dear Van Gogh, players can now experience what it would be like to walk through paintings by Vincent van Gogh, one of the world's most famous artists. The update is available for the Apple, Android, Switch, PlayStation, and PC versions of Sky: Children of the Light, and they are all free to play.

Van Gogh was born in the Netherlands and lived from 1853 to 1890. Many of his best-known paintings are of landscapes, self-portraits, and flowers. It is said he didn't sell many when he was alive, but he is now one of history's most important artists. Dear Van Gogh allows people to get to know his work and the people who helped him, including his brother and sister-in-law.

A self-portrait by Vincent van Gogh

The video game has levels based on some of the big moments in van Gogh's life, as well as his artwork. His paintings have been recreated in 3D, which makes them explorable. There is also a story told through the letters Vincent and his brother, Theo, wrote to each other. They show how Vincent found his style as an artist and how Theo encouraged him when few people seemed interested in his work. Players also learn how Theo's wife, Johanna, persuaded people of Vincent's genius.

The game's developer, thatgamecompany, wants players to think about why van Gogh and his paintings matter today and how great artists rely on the support of others. Jenova Chen, the CEO and creative director, said he sees Dear Van Gogh as "our tribute to the love and devotion behind Vincent van Gogh and his family."

READER RECOMMENDS

Project Hail Mary *PG-13 (Prime Video or rent on other platforms)*

"This movie is about a science teacher who wakes up on a spaceship that is not meant to return to Earth. He has no memory of who he is or how he got there. He eventually realizes he has to solve a riddle about what is causing the sun to die out or people on Earth will die of starvation. He meets an alien named Rocky, whose planet, Erid, is dying too. They team up to save Earth and Erid. The story is told from the past and the present. I like it because it is full of action and twists, it is funny and serious at the same time, and it shows you can do anything if you set your mind to it." Ronit, 10, Washington

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

WATCH: MALORY TOWERS

Based on Enid Blyton's beloved books, this series follows student Darrell Rivers and her friends at a girls' boarding school in Cornwall, England, in the late 1940s. Across seven seasons, the students navigate peer rivalries, strict teachers, sports, and mysterious happenings, including reports of a resident ghost. (BYUtv)

LISTEN: LIGHTCATCHERS

This story podcast features original adventures with music by author and songwriter C.C. Kimmel and his band. Season one follows a pirate and his crew, and season two is about forest friends working to reclaim their stolen superpowers. The shows also explore emotions, mental health, and resilience. (Major podcast platforms)

PLAY: MADDEN NFL 27

Chicago Bears quarterback Caleb Williams has the honor of being on the cover of the new edition of this long-running sports video game franchise. This year's updates include timing-based catches, smarter defensive AI, changing weather, and an expanded Superstar mode. (PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, Nintendo Switch 2, and PC)

CHRIS ALBERT/STUDIOWERKSDC; DISNEY (2); SMARTER EVERY DAY; YACHT CLUB GAMES; ON LEFT PAGE: TROY B. THOMPSON; TRACY PETRUCCI; DENVER ARTS & VENUES

THIS WEEK'S BOOK

Fifth Grade Top Dogs

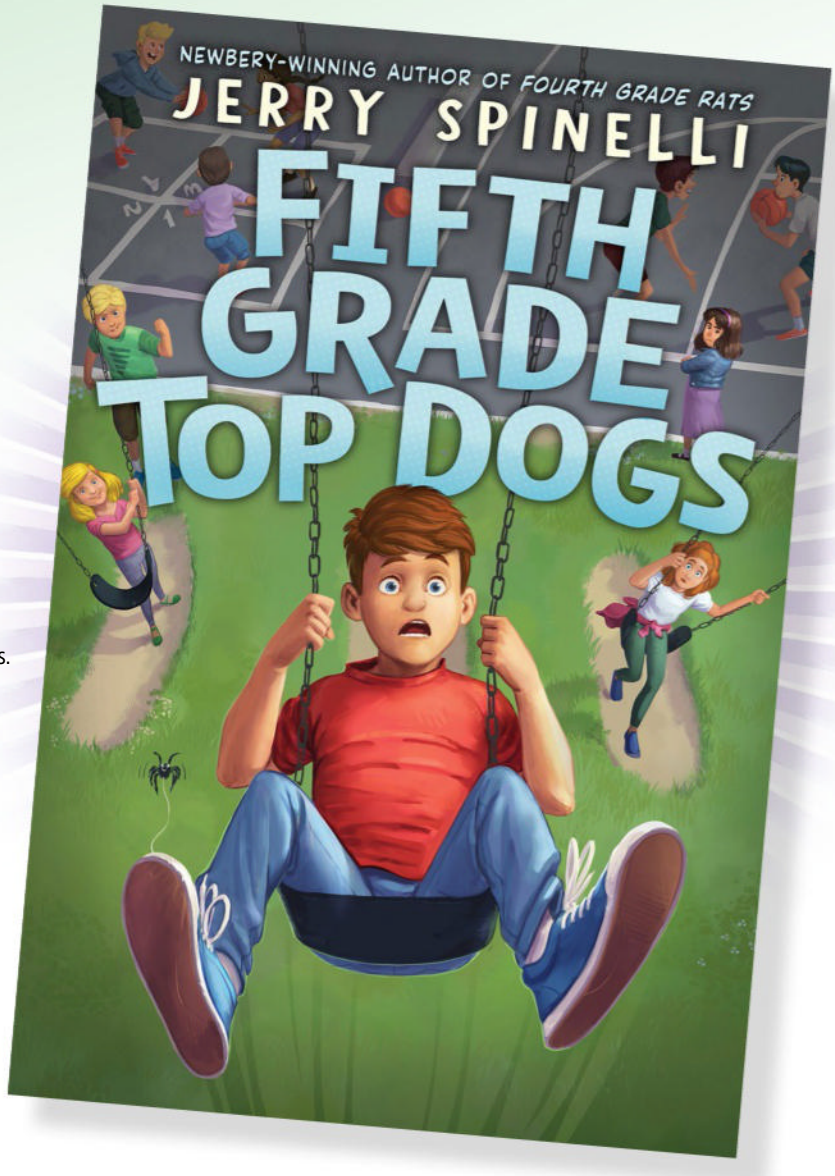
By Jerry Spinelli, illustrations by David Miles

George, who is known by his nickname Suds, and his friends are getting ready to start fifth grade, the highest grade at the elementary school they attend. A week before school begins, Suds's friend Joey calls him and tells him they'll be Top Dogs of the school this year and they deserve respect.

Suds isn't so sure at first, but he warms up to Joey's idea. He tells his mom that he'll be taking showers instead of baths from now on and he's asking for privacy from his little sister. His mom explains that he needs to project Top Dogginess, and his friends tell him "you get cool by acting cool."

Over the next few months, the boys push boundaries, taking all the Halloween candy from a neighbor's bowl and not doing work assigned by a substitute teacher because they don't feel like it. But when there's an emergency in school, Suds and Joey come to the rescue. That's when they realize what being a Top Dog really means.

Although this is the third book in the *Rule the School* series, it works as a standalone. The story's sense of humor and easy narration make it a great back-to-school read. *Ages 7-11*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

In the beginning of the school year, do you think Suds and his friends acted like leaders? Explain.

Which character would you most want to be friends with? Why?

In what ways do Suds and his friends take being Top Dog too far?

Have you ever felt pressured to follow a friend who's getting in trouble? Explain.

Were you surprised that Suds stood up for his sister at the playground? Why or why not?

How do the illustrations enhance the story?

Find your next great read

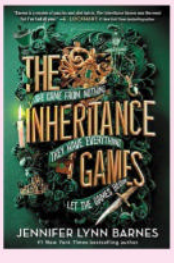
If you liked…

Isle of Ever

By Jen Calonita

Benny, a 12-year-old girl, has only two weeks to find an island that vanished if she's going to break a long-standing curse and inherit a fortune. Following clues from an ancestor, Benny and her friends attempt to solve the mystery. *Ages 10+*

You might like…



The Inheritance Games

By Jennifer Lynn Barnes

To receive an inheritance from a billionaire she doesn't know, Avery must move into his house filled with secret passages and live for a year with his furious grandsons who expected to inherit the fortune. Will they unravel the puzzle of why Avery was chosen? *Ages 12+*

Guess the book this quote comes from

"Don't we all live in our heads? Where else could we possibly exist? Our brains are the universe."

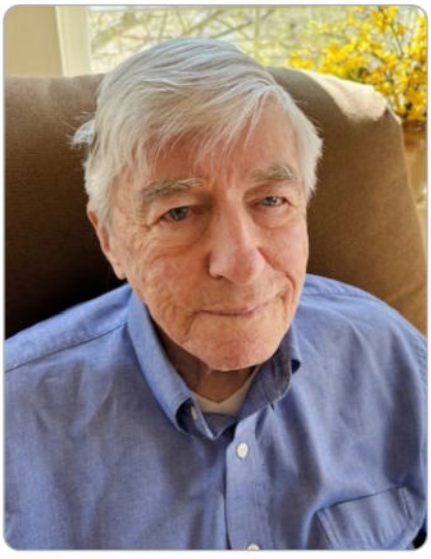
Hint: This 2014 Newbery Medal winner is a novel interspersed with comic panels. It was adapted into a movie in 2021.

Answer: *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures* by Kate DiCamillo. Dr. Meescham, a kind neighbor, says this line during a conversation with Flora about the power of the mind.

THIS WEEK'S AUTHOR

Jerry Spinelli

Award-winning author Jerry Spinelli is known for his children's, middle-grade, and young adult novels that often focus on friendship, identity, and growing up. In 1991, Spinelli won the Newbery Medal for his book *Maniac Magee*, which follows an orphan boy seeking a new home in a segregated town.



What inspired *Fifth Grade Top Dogs*?

All this began with a schoolyard chant that I remember from recess. We would say "first-grade babies, second-grade cats, third-grade angels, fourth-grade rats," and that's how the idea started. So I first wrote the book *Fourth Grade Rats*. And then came the next book in the series, *Third Grade Angels*, and now here we are with *Fifth Grade Top Dogs*.

What can readers learn from George's experience of being a Top Dog?

George now sees how he fits into the larger scheme of things in this world, and that's kind of a big thing for a child.

Did you grow up with any siblings?

Yes, I have a brother who's four and a half years younger. When we were kids we would sometimes have conflicts. But then we both grew up and wound up going out and playing golf together and becoming best friends.

Did you always want to be a writer?

No. I wanted to be a baseball player! I was a good student and I read my assignments in school, but it never occurred to me to spend my free time sitting down with a book. I wanted to be outside on a field or by a creek or playing baseball, basketball, or football. I was in 11th grade before I paid much attention to books, and then I wised up.

Did any writers inspire you?

I read the sports section of the local newspaper every day. The sports editor, Red McCarthy, had a column, and I was a big fan. Before I read novels, he was my favorite writer, and if anybody influenced me, it was him.

What is your top ice cream flavor?

Chocolate almond.

Reader recommends

Folktales for Fearless Girls *by Myriam Sayalero*

"This book is really great! It includes 14 different stories from places around the world. All of them are based on girls who save princes, travel long distances to serve their families, and take charge. This book really inspired me because most stories have it the opposite way—with boys doing those things—and even the introduction is great! It also comes with awesome illustrations by Dani Torrent. It's perfect for everyone!" Claudia, 12, Texas

Do you have a book to recommend? We want to hear about it! With an adult's help, please send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 books about cool professions

Celebrate Labor Day (September 7) with one of these career-minded reads.

How to Be a Vet and Other Animal Jobs

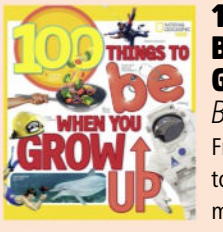
By Dr. Jess French, illustrated by Sol Linero

After describing what veterinarians do and the challenges of their job, this informative book explains that there are different kinds of vets. For instance, avian vets specialize in treating birds. The book also covers other experts that work with animals, like a herpetologist (expert in amphibians and reptiles). *Ages 6–10*

I Like the Outdoors...What Jobs Are There?

By Carron Brown, illustrated by Roberto Blefari

This book features 25 professions, from botanist (scientist who studies plant life) to ski instructor. Each career has a section called "My Job: Best and Worst Parts." For instance, the best part of being a marine biologist is exploring the marine world. The worst part: seasickness! *Ages 8–12*



100 Things to Be When You Grow Up

By Lisa M. Gerry

From makeup artist to rodeo clown to mushroom forager, this book covers a wide variety of possible careers. The sections about each job include about two to four pages of description plus interesting fun facts. For instance, you'll learn that there's a whole division of the US Coast Guard that is devoted to tracking icebergs. *Ages 8–12*

Find out more about *The Week Junior* Book Club and check out our previous titles at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF JERRY SPINELLI; GETTY IMAGES

Ready, Set...STACK!

Solve the puzzles. Crack the code. Start the adventure.

Williamsburg is home to an exciting **Pancake Trail**—and your first stop is right here! **Complete each puzzle to collect a secret letter**. Once you've uncovered them all, unscramble the letters to reveal the Pancake Code. Then scan the QR code to learn how your family can continue the fun on the real Williamsburg Pancake Trail and celebrate at the **Williamsburg Pancake Festival!**

1

STACK SEARCH

Find all the pancake-themed words hidden in the grid.

Find and circle the words below. They may go across, down, diagonally, or backward! Don't forget to fill in your first secret letter.

B	P	U	R	Y	S	Q	W	R	T	F	B
T	U	X	C	V	B	Y	B	R	O	U	Q
Z	X	F	C	V	B	R	M	W	T	E	R
F	T	E	J	S	D	G	K	T	A	M	M
O	G	S	H	T	L	L	E	R	C	A	J
R	G	T	O	Q	M	R	L	E	C	P	C
K	A	I	O	L	P	Z	Y	A	S	L	G
B	M	V	T	P	A	N	C	A	K	E	H
T	N	A	O	U	W	H	G	N	P	O	I
W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S	B	U	R	G
Q	S	F	U	J	K	B	J	N	M	I	O
Y	T	_	A	F	K	A	E	R	B	L	P

WORDS TO FIND

- Butter
- Syrup
- Breakfast
- Festival
- Maple
- Williamsburg
- Pancake
- Fork

2

BUTTER MIX-UP

Unscramble the Breakfast Words

Write the missing secret letter in the circle.

UNSCRAMBLE THESE WORDS:

KECAPAN _ _ _ _ _ _ _

UPSRY _ _ _ _ _

UTREBT _ _ _ _ _ _

3

FIND THE FLAPJACK

Circle the pancake that's different.

Find the secret letter underneath it.

T M R A L

ADVERTISEMENT

4

HELP THE SYRUP REACH THE PANCAKE!

Only ONE path reaches the pancake.
Follow it to discover your secret letter!

5

SWEET RIDDLE

The first letter of your answer is your final secret letter!

I help spread butter.
I help cut pancakes into bites.
You'll find me beside your plate.
What am I?

_ _ _ _ _

YOU CRACKED IT!
Write your secret letters here.

1 2 3 4 5

HINT: It's what pancakes love to do!

Mission Complete!

Now **SCAN** to continue your adventure on the real Williamsburg Pancake Trail.

VISIT WILLIAMSBURG
JAMESTOWN ▼ YORKTOWN

VisitWilliamsburg.com

Word search

Can you find all these palindromes (words and phrases with letters in the same order forward and backward)? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

CIVIC
DEED
DON'T NOD
DRAWN INWARD
LEVEL
MADAM, I'M ADAM
NEVER ODD OR EVEN
NOON
NOW I WON
PULL-UP
RACE CAR
RADAR
REVIVER
SAGAS
SOLOS
SO MANY DYNAMOS
TENET
TOOT
TOP SPOT
TUNA NUT

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

FOUR IN A ROW

Place four of the letters below to complete the first pair of words, in the same order in both words. Use the remaining four letters to complete the second pair of words, in the same order in both words.

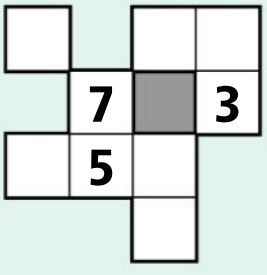
A H I L P S T V

_ I _ _ A C _ I O
H O _ _ C O _ C _

_ A N _ L _ _
A _ A _ _ _ B L E

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks in each sentence with two words that are the same except the middle letter is deleted from the second word, like REGAL and REAL. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

1. My grandfather only wears a suit a few ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ each year, but he owns dozens of shirts, cuff links, and ___ ___ ___ ___.
2. Elks make a high-pitched ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ called a bugle, which is a roar that starts in their throat but ends as a whistle through their ___ ___ ___ ___.
3. Before planting season, the farmer makes sure to carefully ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ his soil to see if a harmful species of ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ might have invaded it.

Spot the difference

These two pictures of a breakfast appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Fill in the blanks hint: The words in sentence 3 begin with the vowel I.

Afloat in a cardboard boat

At the UK's annual Bristol Harbour Festival, one of the most popular events was a cardboard boat race. Thousands of people gathered to watch teams paddle as quickly as they could in boats they had created out of cardboard. The paddles also had to be made of cardboard, leading to silly, soggy fun as the creations absorbed water. Many racers wore homemade costumes along with their life jackets, and the harbor master made sure everyone got back to dry land safely—even when the boats didn't stay afloat.

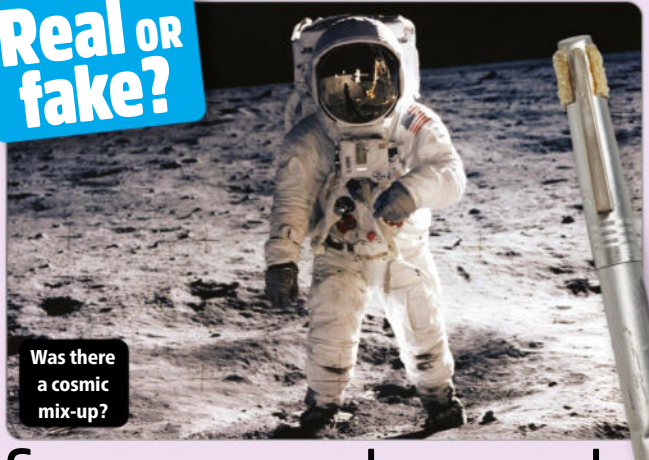
Capybaras visit government

Two recent visitors to the Mato Grosso state legislature in Brazil were large and in charge, but they weren't exactly invited guests. While lawmakers were preparing for a vote, a pair of capybaras, the world's largest rodents, strolled right past the building's guards and security turnstiles. Staff managed to herd the fuzzy giants back out of the government building, which is next to a park filled with wildlife. They say the native capybaras show up often to munch on the grass and cool off in a fountain out front.

A doggone good birthday

It's not every day that an American icon turns 90! In honor of the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile's milestone anniversary, fans who were celebrating their own 90th birthdays could enter to win a surprise visit from the hot dog–shaped vehicle. The brand also teamed up with the Milk Bar sweet shop to offer a special cake covered with "ketchup and mustard" sprinkles, surrounded by 20 classic franks in buns, and topped off with a miniature cutout of a Wienermobile. On social media, Oscar Mayer called it "grilliant."

Real or fake?



Space pen sparks a search

A famous pen from the Apollo 11 Moon mission went missing at an auction when someone mistook it for a typical writing instrument. The pen, which astronaut Buzz Aldrin used to fix a broken switch on his spacecraft, was expected to sell for more than $850,000. But panic ensued when the historic object disappeared from a display. A passerby, who thought the pen had been left there by mistake, had grabbed it to fill out a form and then left it on a nearby table. Is this story true, or is it a stu-*pen*-dous lie?*

*Fake! No one borrowed Buzz Aldrin's famous pen at the auction. The felt-tip pen was successfully sold for about $857,600, along with the broken switch that Aldrin fixed during the 1969 mission.

PLASTER/BRISTOL HARBOUR FESTIVAL; MATO GROSSO STATE LEGISLATURE; OSCAR MAYER; GETTY IMAGES; THE BUZZ ALDRIN FAMILY TRUST; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Editor's note

This week our team remembers Jackie, a magnificent bird described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "arguably the world's most famous bald eagle," following her death on August 10 (p5). For years we joined millions of others in watching Jackie, along with her mate Shadow and their eaglets, on a nest cam set up in Southern California's Big Bear Valley, where they lived. We also published stories about them in *The Week Junior*. Last month Jackie fell ill and was taken to a raptor rehabilitation center, where she was treated for weeks but did not recover. Tributes poured in from around the world after she died, and many people also honored her by making donations to the Friends of Big Bear Valley conservation group. As the National Eagle Center said on social media, "Jackie's memory will live on in the hearts and minds of the audience that came to know her—and through that remembrance, she will soar on forever."

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Pets Fur People

This animal shelter in Texas provides long-term housing for neglected and abandoned pets until they can be placed in their forever home. The organization, founded in 1963, promotes responsible pet ownership, prepares families for pet adoption, and provides free health checks and other services to animals. Find out more at petsfurpeople.org.

Pets Fur People
because love is a four-legged word

Speaking up for a cause

Suhana, 12, Kentucky

"I have been reading *The Week Junior* since I was 8 years old, and I want to spread awareness about Turner Syndrome, which I have. It's a rare genetic disease that affects girls and can lead to girls being significantly shorter in stature. It can also make it hard to focus. We often need medical care, help with learning, and other accommodations. I want to educate children, parents, and teachers about this syndrome because spreading the word can help people learn how they can support us."

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

JOKE OF THE WEEK

What kind of dog is best at making their food disappear?

Labracadabradoodles

Writing contest for kids!

Do you love creating imaginative stories? If so, enter the Spooky Stories Writing Contest, sponsored by Abrams, the publisher of best-selling author Jeff Kinney. Select one of the spooky writing prompts, then develop an original story of up to 1,000 words. The grand prize winner will have their story published in a future issue of *The Week Junior*. Submissions will be judged by Kinney and *The Week Junior*'s editorial director, Andrea Barbalich. The deadline to enter is September 14. Get the prompts and more at spooky.abrams.link.

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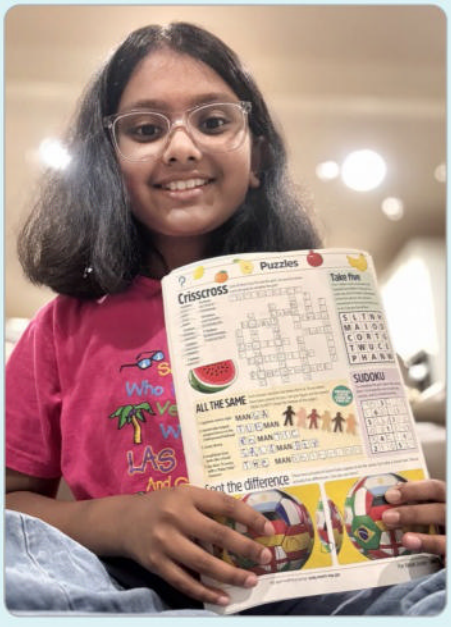
THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"My favorite player is Jalen Brunson, and I was so happy when the Knicks won!" Eden, 10, New Jersey

"I love *The Week Junior*'s puzzles! They entertain me throughout my day!" Aditri, 10, Tennessee



"I made the orange creamsicle pops with my grandmother as a summer treat." Krish, 11, Alabama

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Ms. Sarah Lois**

School: **West Hillsborough Elementary School**

"Ms. Lois is an amazing fourth grade teacher! She never lets us give up. Ms. Lois always tells us that we can do our best, and she encourages us to have a growth mindset. She challenges us to do well on our assessments, and she bakes us her famous cookies if we get 90% or above on our tests. Ms. Lois is the Teacher of the Week every week for our class!"
Hannah, 10, California

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Four in a row
pistachio, hopscotch
vanilla, available

Fill in the blanks
1. times, ties
2. noise, nose
3. inspect, insect

Unused letters: Palindrome is Greek for running back again.

4		9	6
	7		3
2	5	1	
		8	

Quiz answers (from page 30)

1 Milkweed **2** True **3** b) Suds **4** a) Chinese pangolin **5** Philadelphia Phillies **6** b) 2015 **7** False. The prize is for American Fiction. **8** a) 17 **9** False. It features the art of Vincent van Gogh. **10** Zebra finch **11** c) US **12** *Fantasia* **13** True **14** c) Will Forte **15** c) 90

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on what type of plant?

2 True or false? On August 12, a total solar eclipse was visible from Europe for the first time since 1999.

True ☐ False ☐

3 In the book *Fifth Grade Top Dogs*, what is George's nickname?

a) Slug b) Suds c) Spud

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 The Himalayan pangolin was previously thought to be part of which other species?

a) Chinese pangolin

b) Sunda pangolin

c) Giant pangolin

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

5 What baseball team won this year's MLB Field of Dreams game?

6 In what year were wildlife cameras installed outside the nest of Jackie the bald eagle?

a) 2012 b) 2015 c) 2018

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

7 True or false? Author Ann Patchett will receive the 2026 Library of Congress Prize for American Nonfiction.

True ☐ False ☐

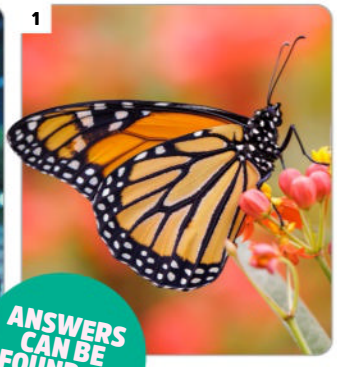
8 How many miles long is the Large Hadron Collider?

a) 17 b) 34 c) 51

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

14

1



ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

15

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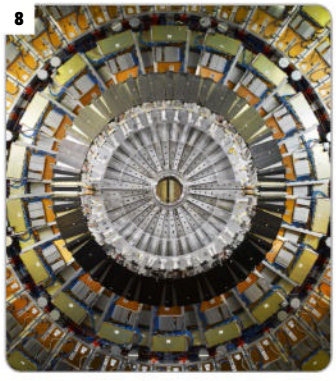

6

9 True or false? A new update to the video game Sky: Children of the Light features the art of Leonardo da Vinci.

True ☐ False ☐

10 Scientist Julie Elie identified and translated 11 different calls made by what kind of bird?

11 Which country finished on top of the medal standings, including winning the most golds, at the 2026 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships?

a) Australia

b) Canada

c) US

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

12 What classic Disney film inspired a new Mickey Mouse balloon for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade?

13 True or false? The new dinosaur species Uragasaurus kalasinensis was identified from a single vertebra fossil.

True ☐ False ☐

14 Who plays Wile E. Coyote's lawyer in the new movie *Coyote vs. Acme*?

a) John Cena

b) Lana Condor

c) Will Forte

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile recently turned how many years old?

a) 70 b) 80 c) 90

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

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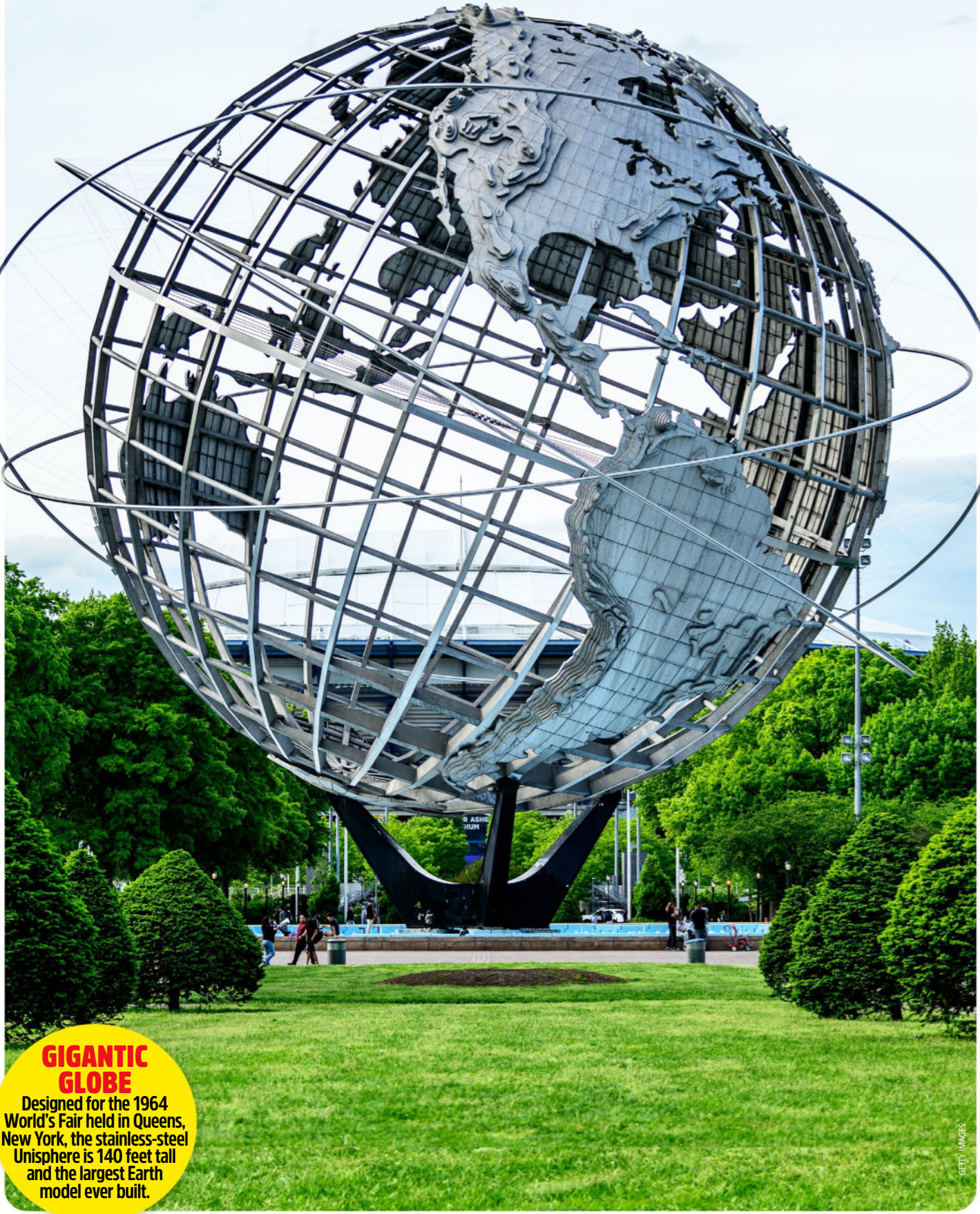

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